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FROM THE
SOUTH
LAND
OLIVE E. ODE

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Verse

By
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THE SOUTHLAND FLAG

The golden poppy of the South
Held up its pretty head,
And from the petals of its mouth
These words I think it said:

“I love the broad expanse of land,
I love the hills and sea—
The pearly shells that grace the sand
In all their mystery.

“I love the trees that shelter me,
The grass that round me grows,
The myriad flowers that I see,
The fragrance of the rose.

“I love the blueness of the sky
With ne’er a cloud to mar;
The gentle breeze that wafts a sigh
From out its journey far.

“I love the sun that warms me,
And gladdens all the world;
Though but a poppy I may be—
I’m the Southland flag unfurled.”

A SMILE

Your smile was kind and gentle
As you bade adieu to me;
It bore a message simple,
As sweet as sweet can be.

It spoke to me of fondness,
And carried sympathy
To take away my wanness,
And break my apathy.

It carried meaning tenderness
That eyes of love will see,
And though 'twas meant in kindness
It brought much more to me.

AT SUNSET

As I wander near the distant hills,
Where the sunset lingers low,
I forget life's turmoil and its ills
And my heart warms with the glow.

The beauteous red-purple haze
Spreads o'er the Western Slope,
Entwining in its wondrous maze
My soul with new-born hope.

And when the great white moon appears
Amid the warm-hued sky,
My soul awakes and stills its fears
And all my troubles die.

The calmness of the night creeps on,
And in the great dusk gloom,
I feel God's mighty hand upon
All things that live and bloom.

For Nature is the soul of love
Whose spirit doth instil
Our minds with nobler thoughts above
For peace and all goodwill.

LOVE

There's love within your tender eyes,
There's fire within your soul,
There's madness in your gentle sighs
Where countless heart-throbs roll.

There's heaven in your clinging arms,
There's bliss beneath your kiss,
There's depth to fathom in your charms
And joys I ne'er would miss.

There's passion in your lips so red
That tremble when I'm near;
There's tenderness still left unsaid—
Sweet nervous thrills of fear.

There's modesty behind your flush,
Emotion in your tears;
Perception in your sweet, shy blush
That's new in all the years.

There's human-weakness in your heart,
There's strength within your mind;
Surrender in desire apart
From every sordid kind.

There's love and life in every vein
That courses madly on,
Like fire that smoulders in the rain—
A captive midst the throng.

AVALON

O dreamy, dreamy Avalon,
Where waves start singing with the dawn,
And wash across the sandy shore,
Calling to you evermore.

Flying fish all shimmering
Rival with the birds of wing;
And in the clear blue of the sea
There is magic mystery.

With the dusk the moonlight gleams,
Inviting you to happy dreams;
Shadowed hills outline the sky
Where myriad stars all lights defy.

Soft strains of music fill the air,
Bringing dreams so bright and fair;
Imagination leaping strides—
With soul communes, and shy confides.

Night creeps on and Nature sleeps,
And in each day a new hope creeps
For life and peace and happy song,
O dreamy, dreamy Avalon.



NATURE

When life seems drear and tragic,
 Just gaze at the old sunlight;
List to the birds' sweet magic,
 Watch Nature in her might.

Walk through the valleys olden,
 Amid the glad young grass;
Pass by the poppies golden
 And violets in a mass.

Drink in the fragrant briar,
 And the sweet scent of the rose;
The bud just like its sire,
 Unfolding as it grows.

Pause by the trickling fountain
 In its shower of life to birds;
Commune with the snow-capped mountain
 That awes beyond all words.

Linger among the noble trees
 That grow so straight and tall;
See the swaying branch at ease
 Throw out its springtime call.

Then ask yourself this query:—
 Is life or you all wrong?
Have faith, forget the dreary,
 Make life a bright sweet song.

THE MISER

In quest of gold I lived my life
And found the weariness of strife—
The empty heart, the stilted soul—
'Twas all there was—the final goal.

I missed the joys that others knew,
The love, the home, the children too ;
The happiness of friendship's clasp—
All were missing from my grasp.

The soul to feast on Nature's might—
Sweet Charity's kind, thoughtful light,
The heart to give a helping hand—
Were not for me to understand.

I missed the sound of chirping birds,
The tenderness of love's sweet words ;
The mystery of land and sea
Were one and all alike to me.

Gold filled my sight with grasping greed,
And sowed the bitterest of seed ;
And in the end when youth was past,
I realized my loss at last.

HIDDEN FIRES

Dost thou think to forget me, O cruel?
Oblivion is not for thee,
But the fight of a death-doomed duel
From the shackles of love to be free.

Like demons that torture and strangle
Shall thy soul love's captive be;
As devils that struggle and wrangle,
Thy harassed thoughts of me.

When thou wakest to call of morning
From wearily restless night,
In thy heart shall pangs be a warning
Of thy soul's invincible right.

When evening darkens about thee
And storms o'ershadow the sky,
Old heartaches of memory will flout thee,
And for me shall come thy lone cry.

When gaiety, song and laughter
Surround with their cadence of joys,
Then will come the vacant thereafter
That mocks in the wake of the noise.

When ties that are strong and binding
Grasp thy life in their iron grip,
Banished thoughts shall come unwinding
The lash of a scathing whip.

And then in a memory deadened
Whose bleakness o'erspreads like a mask
Shall thy heart be embittered, leadened
In the toils of thy hopeless task.

A MESSAGE

When birds are singing in the trees
And branches swaying in the breeze,
I wonder if remembered words
Come like a message with the birds—

Of summer days when you and I
Wandered beneath the azure sky,
Plighting our love for future years,
Whispering hopes and tender fears.

I'm waiting yet by the deep, clear lake,
Renouncing all for your dear sake;
Telling as in days of yore,
Of love that fills me more and more.

A LOVE GREETING

I'm longing for a sight of you,
A kiss, a whispered word or two—
A fond look from your dear, dear eyes—
A call to take me by surprise.

I'm wearying of time so drear,
I'm pining for your kind touch, dear,
I'm hungering to hear you say
The sweet, old things of yesterday.

THE HERMIT OF THE YUKON

I hear the wild wind whistle—
The cry of the hungry wolf,
And the snow-storm's mighty wrestle
As it beats on my log-hut roof.

I wake from a nightmare of horrors
Wrought by dreams of the ages past,
And my soul heavy-laden with sorrows
Shrinks from visions that wake me
aghast.

The stretch of the Yukon dreary,
The howl of the lonely beast,
Haunt in their nightly vigil weary
A brain to madness leased.

The mounds of the snow-clad valley
Are palls in their shadowed white,
And forms take shape to rally
A conscience long hid from sight.

I see again in the reaping—
Wild eyes of wife and child—
With flames around them leaping—
Oh, God, it drives me wild.

I was mad, insane with jealousy—
There was a man in the case—
Perhaps it was all a fallacy,
'Twas all one in the end of the race.

I crept to the side door entrance
And passed a man in the dark;
I judged and passed the sentence,
But a long way off the mark.

'Twas a poor old lonely beggar
She sheltered that night from cold—
His clothes were tattered and meagre—
His shoulders were bent and old.

I wasn't the man to reason,
I forgot her uphill fight,
I thought it all rank treason
And canceled the debt that night.

The cabin she'd made a haven,
In this God-forsaken land,
Perished at touch of my craven,
Incendiary hand.

The shot rings out that killed her,
Her blood—a stain on my soul;
A baby's shriek—the thunder—
Like the mighty ocean's roll.

God, it martyrs my being,
Pierced with each wild beast's cry;
I toss in my fever of seeing,
Tortured and longing to die.

Their cries, their moans still haunt me,
Borne down in this valley of dark,
While vengeful furies taunt me—
God, how I missed my mark!

The direful shriek of the eerie wind
Came moaning from afar,
As the agony of a man who'd sinned
Set the gates of hell ajar.

Then came the distant roaring,
As the howl of a beast at bay—
The avalanche snow-slide pouring
Swift death the debt to pay.

The last sad moan of the hermit
Tolled the end of a life's remorse;
The storm raged on and the lightning lit
The grave of mad jealousy's course.

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